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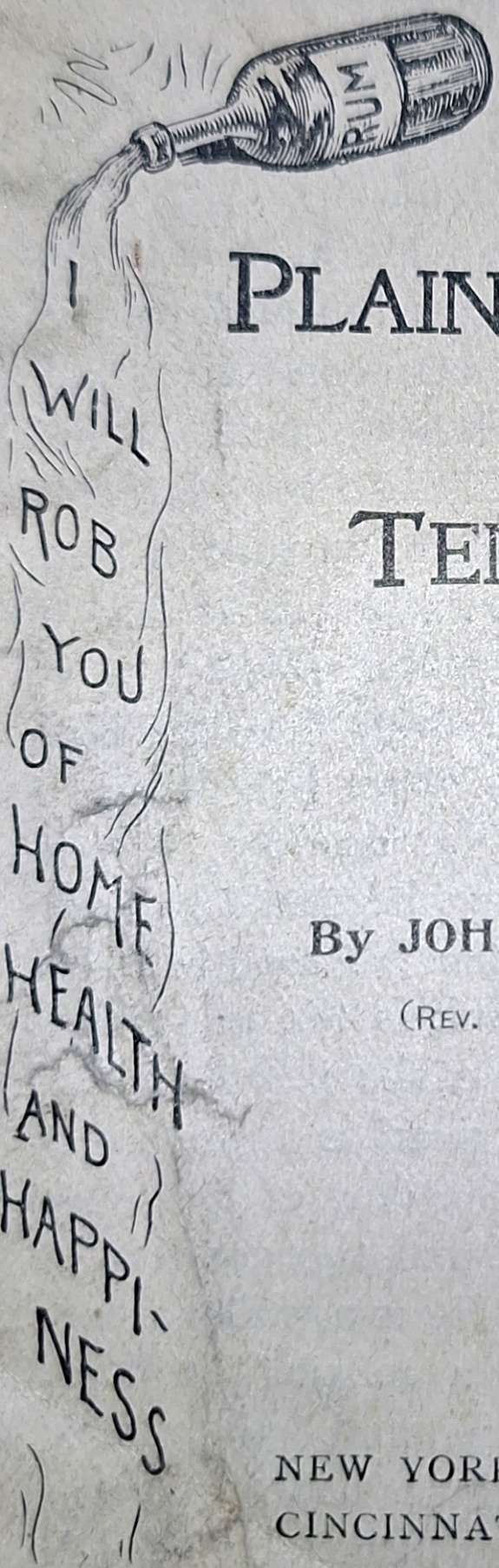

PLAIN TALKS ON TEMPERANCE

By JOHN PLOUGHMAN

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THE TOPER.

THIS is the man who is always dry—because he takes so much heavy wet. He is a loose fellow, who is fond of getting tight. He is no sooner up than his nose is in the cup, and his money begins to run down the hole which is just under his nose. He is not a blacksmith, but he has a spark in his throat, and all the publican's barrels can't put it out. If a pot of beer is a yard of land he must have swallowed more acres than a plowman could get over for many a day, and still he goes on swallowing until he takes to wallowing. All goes down Gutter Lane. Like the snipe, he lives by suction. If you ask him how he is, he says he would be quite right if he could moisten his mouth. His purse is a bottle, his bank is the publican's till, and his casket is a cask; pewter is his precious metal, and his pearl is a mixture of gin and beer (purl). The dew of his youth comes from Ben Nevis, and the comfort of his soul is cordial gin. He is a walking barrel, a living drainpipe, a moving swilltub. They say, "Loth to drink, and loth to leave off;" and as to ending, that is out of the question while he can borrow twopence. This is the gentleman who sings:

"He that buys land buys many stones,
He that buys meat buys many bones,
He that buys eggs buys many shells,
He that buys good ale buys nothing else."

He will never be hanged for leaving his drink behind him. He drinks in season and out of season; in summer because he is hot, and in winter because he is cold. A drop of beer never comes too soon, and he would get up in the middle of the night for more only he goes to bed too tipsy. He has heard that if you get wet-footed a glass of whisky in your boots will keep you from catching cold, and he argues that the best way to get one glass of the spirit into each boot is to put two doses where it will run into your legs. He is never long without an excuse for another pot, or, if perchance he does not make one, another lushington helps him.

"Some drink when friends step in,
And some when they step out;
Some drink because they're thin,
And some because they're stout.

"Some drink because 'tis wet,
And some because 'tis dry;
Some drink another glass
To wet the other eye."

THE TIPPLER.

WATER is this gentleman's abhorrence, whether used inside or out; but most of all he dreads it taken inwardly—except with spirits, and then the less the better. He says that the pump would kill him, but he never gives it a chance. He laps his liquor, and licks his chaps, but he will never die through the badness of the water from the well. It is a pity that he does not run the risk. Drinking cold water neither makes a man sick nor in debt, nor his wife a widow, but this mighty fine ale of his will do all this for him, make him worse than a beast while he lives, and wash him away to his grave before his time. The old Scotchman said, "Death and drink draining are near neighbors," and he spoke the truth. They say that drunkenness makes some men fools, some beasts, and some devils, but, according to my mind, it makes all men fools, whatever else it does. Yet, when a man is as drunk as a rat, he sets up to be a judge and mocks at sober people.

There's nothing too bad for a man to say or do when he is half-seas over. It is a pity that any decent body should go near such a common sewer. If he does not fall into the

worst of crimes it certainly is not his fault, for he has made himself ready for anything the devil likes to put into his mind. He does least hurt when he begins to be top-heavy and to reel about—then he becomes a blind man with good eyes in his head, and a cripple with legs on. He sees two moons, and two doors to the public house, and tries to find his way through both the doors at once. Over he goes, and there he must lie unless somebody will wheel him home in a barrow or carry him to the police station.

Solomon says the glutton and the drunkard shall come to poverty, and that the drinker does in no time. He gets more and more down at the heel, and as his nose gets redder and his body is more swollen, he gets to be more of a shack and more of a shark. His trade is gone and his credit has run out, but he still manages to get his beer. He treats an old friend to a pot, and then finds that he has left his purse at home and of course the old friend must pay the shot. He borrows till no one will lend him a groat, unless it is to get off lending him a shilling. Shame has long since left him, though all who know him are ashamed of him. His talk runs like the tap and is full of stale dregs; he is very kind over his beer, and swears he loves you and

would like to drink your health and love you again. Poor sot! much good will his blessing do to anyone who gets it; his poor wife and family have had too much of it already and quake at the very sound of his voice.

Now, if we try to do anything to shut up a boozing house or shorten the hours for guzzling, we are called all sorts of bad names, and the windup of it all is, "What! rob a poor man of his beer?" The fact is that they rob the poor man *by* his beer. The ale jug robs the cupboard and the table, starves the wife and strips the children; it is a great thief, housebreaker, and heartbreaker, and the best possible thing is to break it to pieces or keep it on the shelf bottom upward.

GREAT DRINKERS AND GREAT THINKERS.

WONDERFUL men and white rats are not so scarce as most people think. Folks may talk as they like about Mr. Gladstone, Lord Beaconsfield, and that sharp gentleman, Bismarck; but Jack and Tom and Harry, and scores more that I know of, could manage their business for them a fine sight better—at least they think so, and are quite

ready to try. Great men are as plentiful as mice in an old wheat stack down our way. Every parish has one or two wonderful men—indeed, most public houses could show one at least, and generally two; and I have heard that on Saturday nights, when our "Blue Dragon" is full, there may be seen as many as twenty of the greatest men in the world in the tap-room, all making themselves greater by the help of pots of beer. When the jug has been filled and emptied a good many times, the blacksmith feels he ought to be prime minister; Styles, the carter, sees the way to take off the taxes; and Old Hob, the ratcatcher, roars out:

"They're all a pack of fools,
And good-for-nothing tools;
If they'd only send for me,
You'd see how things would be."

If you have a fancy to listen to these great men when they are talking you need not go into the bar, for you can hear them outside the house—they generally speak four or five at a time, and every one in a Mitcham whisper, which is very like a shout. What a fine flow of words they have! There's no end to it—and it's a pity there was ever any beginning, for there's generally a mix-up of foul

talk with their politics, and this sets them all roaring with laughter. A few evenings in such company would poison the mind of the best lad in the parish. I am happy to say that these great men have to be turned out at ten o'clock, for then our public house closes—and none too soon, I'm sure.

A precious little is enough to make a man famous in certain companies—one fellow knocked a man's eye out at a prizefight; another stowed away twice as much pudding as four pigs could have disposed of; another stood on his head and drank a glass of beer; and another won a prize by grinning through a horse collar; and for such things as these the sots of the village think mightily of them. Little things please little minds, and nasty things please dirty minds. If I were one of those wonderful fellows I would ask the nearest way to a place where nobody would know me.